



Revitalizing Teacher Leadership in Secondary Schools Through a Values and Culture Approach: Towards Schools with a Collaborative and Adaptive Culture

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ABSTRACT

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Educational transformation in the era of digital disruption requires schools to build collaborative and adaptive cultures, which strongly depend on the quality of teacher leadership as instructional and learning leaders. However, many secondary schools still demonstrate weak teacher leadership due to hierarchical cultures and administrative, top-down approaches that restrict creativity and professional autonomy. This study aims to analyze the revitalization of teacher leadership based on school values and culture as a strategy for establishing a collaborative and adaptive learning ecosystem. The research employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) through structured searches of national and international scientific sources, followed by rigorous screening based on relevance criteria and thematic analysis to identify patterns and formulate conceptual synthesis. The findings indicate that professional values (trust, responsibility, collaboration, and innovation) and school culture serve as strategic foundations for strengthening teacher leadership, distributed leadership, and school transformation. The implications highlight the importance of teacher empowerment, participatory organizational restructuring, and the development of collective learning culture. In conclusion, revitalizing teacher leadership grounded in values and culture is essential for sustainable school transformation, and further empirical research is required to validate and operationalize its implementation in diverse secondary school contexts.

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INTRODUCTION

Education is a fundamental pillar in developing quality, competitive human resources with integrity, especially in the era of digital disruption and rapid globalization (Voronkova et al., 2023; Sumual et al., 2024). Global society faces pressures from social, economic, and technological change that demand a

high level of adaptability, creativity, and collaborative work skills (Kaur et al., 2025). In this context, schools, as learning organizations, play a strategic role in shaping the character, competencies, and readiness of the younger generation to face the dynamics of modern life (Noprika et al., 2020). However, educational success is largely determined by the quality of leadership exercised by key actors in schools, particularly teachers as learning leaders. Teachers are not only responsible for the instructional process but also for creating a school culture that supports collaboration, innovation, and continuous learning. Therefore, research on revitalizing teacher leadership is crucial to address the need for educational transformation relevant to the demands of the times.

Although the strategic role of teachers as learning leaders has been widely recognized, the reality is that many educational institutions, particularly secondary schools, have not been able to optimize the potential of teacher leadership in driving school change. This challenge arises amidst the escalation of curriculum changes, the demands of technological developments, and the ever-increasing complexity of students' social issues (Dewi, 2024; Ngwenya et al., 2024). Changes in the educational environment require schools to be more adaptive and responsive to current developments, but this transformation is not yet aligned with the leadership culture developing within schools (Mincu, 2022; Tsarkos, 2024). Administrative and centralistic leadership patterns persist, limiting teachers' creativity and professional independence. Schools' unpreparedness to face these changes creates a gap between the ideals of policy and the reality of implementation on the ground. Therefore, the primary problem of this research stems from this gap in educational transformation, which requires reinforcing the role of teachers as leaders of change.

The phenomena occurring in many secondary schools demonstrate that weak teacher leadership results in a suboptimal collaborative and adaptive culture within the school environment. Many schools struggle to build a learning ecosystem based on professional collaboration, reflective dialogue, and collective innovation, which should be the key characteristics of modern schools. The hierarchical school culture and the dominance of a top-down approach to decision-making often hinder teachers' active participation in academic and managerial change processes (Solehudin, 2023). As a result, schools develop not as learning organizations but merely as administrative institutions. In a number of cases, teachers are seen as policy implementers rather than moral leaders or agents of change. This situation results in weak internalization of collective values, low professional trust, and a lack of learning innovation needed to address the complex challenges of contemporary education.

Various previous studies have discussed the importance of teacher leadership in improving the quality of learning and school culture. Emphasized

that teacher leadership encompasses the ability to be agents of change, moral leaders, and facilitators of collaboration that strengthen relationships among school members (Mansyur, & Bunyamin, 2022). However, this research primarily emphasized the role and function of leadership without examining how school values and culture can serve as a foundation for leadership transformation. Similarly, research by Hasan et al. (2025) highlighted the importance of a values-based approach in building school identity but failed to integrate this approach with a systemic and implementable revitalization of teacher leadership models. This limitation indicates a research gap regarding how a values-based approach can effectively serve as a mechanism for teacher leadership change in secondary schools.

Research by (Louis, & Leithwood, 2021) emphasized the importance of establishing a school organizational culture based on collaboration and collective reflection as prerequisites for the formation of professional learning communities. However, this research did not specifically examine how cultural transformation can be driven through values-oriented leadership practices. Meanwhile, (Agus et al., 2021) research explains that revitalization can be understood as a process of reviving fundamental values within educational organizations, but it does not yet provide a comprehensive implementation strategy related to the role of teachers as learning leaders in creating a collaborative and adaptive culture. Therefore, there is an urgent need to conduct research that integrates the perspectives of values, culture, and teacher leadership as a comprehensive and sustainable transformation framework in the secondary school context.

This research is novel (state-of-the-art) because it focuses on the revitalization of teacher leadership based on values and culture to create a collaborative and adaptive school culture, an approach that has not been comprehensively explored in previous literature. While previous research has largely focused on the technical and structural aspects of leadership training, this study offers a transformational perspective rooted in the internalization of values and the strengthening of professional culture as a foundation for authentic change. Amidst the increasing demands for distributed leadership and professional collaboration (Nadeem, 2024), this approach is crucial because it is fundamental and sustainable. This research not only fills a research gap but also makes a strategic contribution to the development of a school leadership model in Indonesia that is relevant to the dynamics of contemporary education.

Based on this background, the main problem of this research is how a values and culture approach can revitalize teacher leadership in secondary schools and how this revitalization contributes to the formation of a collaborative and adaptive school culture. The main argument of this research is that the

revitalization of teacher leadership cannot be achieved through technical and administrative interventions alone, but requires a process of transformation of values, professional beliefs, and a strong organizational culture. This approach is believed to be able to encourage teachers to grow as moral leaders, agents of change, and collaborative actors who are collectively responsible. Thus, this research offers conceptual answers and practical solutions to the problem of the weak role of teacher leadership in facing the challenges of modern education.

This research is expected to provide theoretical and practical contributions to teacher leadership development in the context of secondary school education. Theoretically, this research enriches the study of educational leadership by integrating the perspectives of values, culture, and distributed leadership within a comprehensive revitalization framework. Practically, the results of this study can serve as a reference for policymakers, school principals, and education practitioners in designing values-based teacher professional development programs and building collaborative learning ecosystems that are adaptive to change. Thus, this research offers a model for sustainable and contextual school transformation in accordance with the needs of national education development. Furthermore, this research can serve as a basis for further research examining implementation strategies in real-world school contexts.

RESEACH METHOD

This study adopted a literature review research design with a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) as the primary methodological approach in examining and synthesizing scholarly works related to the revitalization of teacher leadership through values-based and cultural approaches in secondary schools. The selection of the SLR method was grounded in its systematic, transparent, and replicable procedures for identifying, reviewing, and organizing scientific evidence (Syahrizal & Jailani, 2023; Zafri & Astuti, 2021). Data collection involved a structured search across national and international journal databases, conference proceedings, academic books, and scientific repositories by applying relevant keywords. The screening and selection process was conducted through title and abstract review, application of inclusion–exclusion criteria, and full-text evaluation of sources that met substantial relevance standards (Dennstädt et al., 2024). The final set of articles was categorized into thematic clusters to facilitate systematic synthesis.

Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis, which consisted of coding, identifying patterns, comparing findings across studies, and deriving conceptual conclusions concerning the relationship between teacher leadership, values, school culture, and the formation of collaborative and adaptive school culture. To ensure the validity and reliability of the findings, source triangulation

was applied by comparing multiple forms of scholarly publications, and peer debriefing was conducted through academic discussions to validate interpretations and reduce researcher bias. These rigorous procedures ensured that the synthesis results were credible, dependable, and scientifically accountable, reinforcing the strength and reliability of the conclusions produced.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study indicate that school values and culture serve as strategic foundations for developing effective teacher leadership. This conclusion aligns with (Dewi, 2024; Song et al., 2025), who emphasizes that the values of collaboration, trust, responsibility, and innovation are essential elements for participatory leadership practices. In line with this argument, (Plaku, & Leka, 2025) explains that school culture, understood as a system of shared meaning and social practices, can actively motivate teachers to assume proactive leadership roles within their institutions. Expanding on these perspectives, this research demonstrates that values and culture function not only as sources of behavioral orientation but also as transformative forces capable of reshaping power relations and strengthening teachers' professional identities. Therefore, theoretical implications highlight the importance of conceptualizing school leadership not merely through a structural or managerial lens, but as a meaningful social construct embedded within organizational culture.

This study further reinforces the existing literature on the role of teachers as collaborative and adaptive leaders in creating dynamic and responsive learning ecosystems. (Nadeem, 2024; Mansyur, 2021) argue that collaborative leadership enhances the effectiveness of teamwork, collegial interaction, and professional learning relationships among teachers. Complementing this, (Fridayani, 2022) underscores that adaptive leadership requires flexibility and emotional resilience to navigate educational change and increasing levels of uncertainty. The findings of this research show that integrating these two leadership characteristics not only improves teaching and learning quality but also serves as an essential foundation for developing an inclusive and innovative school culture. This positioning enables teachers to act as architects of transformation rather than merely implementers of externally imposed policies.

Additionally, this study highlights the significance of distributed leadership as an effective model for strengthening teacher professional leadership. Consistent with findings by (Afrianti et al., 2024; Marthunis, 2020), distributed leadership supports shared responsibility and collective commitment to school vision and improvement. This study demonstrates that distributed authority enhances teachers' sense of ownership and strengthens the collective capacity of the entire school community. However, an important implication

revealed through this research is that distributed leadership can only flourish when supported by a culture of trust, respect, and healthy collaboration. Without such cultural foundations, distributed leadership risks becoming symbolic rather than transformative.

Furthermore, the findings reveal that revitalizing teacher leadership based on a values-and-culture approach has significant implications for school transformation. (Zhao, & Zhong, 2025) emphasize that school transformation should move beyond structural reforms toward paradigm shifts rooted in continuous learning and reflective practice. This research indicates that effective transformation requires reconstructing school organizational structures toward flatter, participatory, and democratic forms of governance (Ratnasari et al., 2020; Saltman, 2024). Such transformation also necessitates building an egalitarian, trust-based culture (Suwarni, 2022) and advancing pedagogical innovation through continuous development of teacher professional capacity (Faridli et al., 2024). These practical implications offer concrete recommendations for schools to pursue change through teacher empowerment rather than centralized control.

Overall, the discussion demonstrates that revitalizing teacher leadership through the integration of values and culture significantly contributes to shaping a 21st-century school leadership model that is collaborative, adaptive, and grounded in collective learning. This research stresses the urgency of shifting leadership paradigms from hierarchical orientations toward distributed leadership characterized by participation, joint responsibility, and shared expertise. Theoretically, the study broadens the conceptual landscape of educational leadership by incorporating cultural elements as a crucial determinant of school transformation and organizational success. This perspective enriches leadership scholarship, which has previously focused predominantly on technical, managerial, and instructional dimensions.

Practically, the results of this research can serve as guidance for school principals, policymakers, and educational practitioners in designing teacher professional development programs that emphasize value internalization and the cultivation of collaborative school culture. The findings also provide a foundation for implementing sustainable school transformation strategies through structured empowerment and professional mentoring initiatives. Future empirical research is recommended to examine implementation models and contextual dynamics within diverse school environments. Through such initiatives, revitalized teacher leadership can be realized as a transformative force in building educational institutions that are more responsive, innovative, and aligned with the complex demands of modern education.

CONCLUSION

This research confirms that revitalizing teacher leadership through a values and culture approach is a strategic foundation for realizing a collaborative and adaptive school culture. Professional values such as trust, responsibility, openness, and collaboration act as transformative forces that shape teachers' professional identity and drive authentic and sustainable school organizational change. The research findings demonstrate that teacher leadership cannot be viewed solely as an administrative or structural function but needs to be understood as a social and moral process built on a healthy school culture. The theoretical contribution of this research lies in the integration of values perspectives, school culture, and distributed leadership models into a comprehensive conceptual framework, thereby enriching the educational leadership literature, which has so far focused on technical and instructional approaches.

A limitation of this research lies in the use of a literature review design that does not provide empirical evidence regarding the implementation of teacher leadership revitalization in the context of actual practice in secondary schools with diverse characteristics. Therefore, further research is needed using empirical approaches, such as mixed methods or comparative case studies, to test and validate the proposed conceptual model. Future research should also explore the internal and external factors influencing the effectiveness of school culture transformation and develop intervention strategies based on professional mentoring and capacity building for teachers, principals, and policymakers. Thus, further research is expected to strengthen the implementation of leadership practices that are more contextual, participatory, and adaptive to the dynamics of changes in 21st-century education.

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